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Commission on the Status of Women
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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Statement submitted by New Japan Women's Association

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement

Since its foundation in 1962, the New Japan Women's Association (NJWA) has been working, among others, for the abolition of nuclear weapons, rights of women and children, and solidarity with women around the world for peace. As a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, NJWA has attended UN-sponsored World Conferences of Women and Sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Priority theme

On the priority theme of the 52nd Commission on the Status of Women, "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women," NJWA welcomes the fact that the Commission focuses on this theme for the first time. It looks forward to the Commission adopting policy recommendations with concrete action proposals, which will provide valuable input on gender perspectives to the discussions and outcomes in the follow-ups to the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development to be held in Qatar in 2008 and Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, in Ghana in 2008.

The Beijing Platform for Action called for sufficient resources to be allocated to national machineries for the advancement of women as well as to all institutions, as appropriate, that can contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action. However, at the five-year and ten-year reviews of implementation of the BPFA, as well as in the regular sessions of the Commission, it has been repeatedly pointed out that inadequate or lack of budgetary allocations and staffing to national machineries and other institutions has been one of the major obstacles to the implementation. Various international conferences, including those sponsored by the UN, have recognized the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as critical to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and to the development of countries and regions. NJWA therefore urges governments, which bear the greatest responsibility of providing sufficient resources and political support to the implementation of policies and programmes for gender equality and women's empowerment, to incorporate gender perspectives into their budget policies, and to make their utmost effort, such as having dialogues with NGOs, to meet the prime and immediate needs of women.

As part of the negative impact of the globalization of economy, both developed and developing countries are facing the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, and the rapid growth in non-regular workers, particularly among women, which are now hampering governments', NGOs' and other actors' efforts for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. NJWA underscores the need for Member States to review their national policies on economy and employment as well as on Official Development Aid from a gender perspective, so as to effectively invest in women, who are the key players in development.

Review theme

The 52nd Session will also review the implementation of the agreed conclusions on "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding" adopted by the Commission at its 48th session in 2004. NJWA, as an NGO upholding freeing the world of nuclear weapons and war at the top of its agenda, calls for the establishment of an international order of peace based on the UN Charter. It urges the UN system and Member States to make serious efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

NJWA urges Member States in particular to work together to substantially reduce military spending. NJWA believes that this is an issue closely related with the priority theme of this session. While the international community is being challenged to deal with such pressing tasks as poverty, hunger, natural disaster and global warming, a colossal amount of the world's wealth is being spent on armament. As is widely recognized, women and children suffer most from the consequences of poverty and armed conflict. NJWA calls on Member States to demonstrate their political will to reallocate the valuable resources now spent for military purposes to addressing the human needs, for the benefit of all.

United Nations reform

NJWA would like to take this opportunity to voice, together with many women's organizations around the world, its call for a swift implementation of the recommendation made by the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and the Environment for the creation of an independent, stronger women's agency. The UN having a well-resourced women's entity headed by an Under-Secretary-General in place will be the best example of financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, which will encourage Member States to carry out policies at the national level. With regard to the establishment of the women's agency, including the nomination of an Under-Secretary-General who will run the architecture, NJWA emphasizes the need for the UN and Member States to have exchanges of opinions with different NGOs working on the ground and experts of various fields.

NJWA continues to work together with civil society, governments and international organizations including within the United Nations, toward the realization of a common goal of "gender equality, development and peace".